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Groundbreaking Exhibition Explores the Early History of the Projected Image in Contemporary Art

"Turning Moving Images Into Moving Experiences." — *The New York Times*

CLEVELAND — The projected image, whether digital or film-based, is a ubiquitous element in today's cutting-edge art. **Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art, 1964–1977**, on view at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) from June 30 through September 8, 2002, investigates the genesis of this crucial art form. Featuring 16 film, video, and slide-based installations, **Into the Light** looks at the critical period in American art from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s — a decade that produced some of the first and most significant moving image installations in the history of modern art. Many of these installations, known more by reputation than through actual experience, have not been seen since they were first exhibited in the 1960s and 1970s. **Into the Light**, organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, is the first museum exhibition to assemble such a large number of these classic pieces.

The projected image played an important role in redefining the parameters of art, by challenging the divisions that separate concrete media, including painting and sculpture, from more ephemeral matter, such as space and time. Katharine Lee Reid, director of CMA, expressed the importance of this show: "We are thrilled to be able to bring this important exhibition of contemporary art to our community. **Into the Light** provides insight into a revolutionary body of work that has important implications for contemporary artists. The show provides an historical perspective that will, for many of us, feel very new. In presenting this exhibition, the Cleveland

Museum of Art firmly signals its strengthening commitment to collecting and displaying the art of our times, while offering a richly rewarding visual experience for our visitors.”

The artists and their works in this exhibition are the following (in alphabetical order): Vito Acconci, *Other Voices for a Second Sight* (1974); William Anastasi, *Free Will* (1968); Peter Campus, *aen* (1977); Simone Forti, *Striding Crawling* (1977); Dan Graham, *Helix/Spiral* (1973); Gary Hill, *Hole in the Wall* (1974/2001); Joan Jonas, *Mirage* (1976/2001); Anthony McCall, *Line Describing a Cone* (1973); Robert Morris, *Finch College Project* (1969); Bruce Nauman, *Spinning Spheres* (1970); Yoko Ono, *Sky TV* (1966); Dennis Oppenheim, *Echo* (1973); Paul Sharits, *Shutter Interface* (1975); Michael Snow, *Two Sides to Every Story* (1974); Andy Warhol, *Lupe* (1965); and Robert Whitman, *Shower* (1964). [See expanded checklist for more details.]

Background

In the 1960s, artists in this exhibition were engaged with other art forms including sculpture, painting, and photography, but were looking for ways to expand beyond the boundaries implied by those media. According to Jeffrey D. Grove, associate curator of contemporary art at CMA, “In the 1960s, the technology of film and video became widely available and increasingly affordable. An educated and intellectual group, these artists were able to use this technology to explore the physical parameters of space and the psychological limits of time, and manipulate their experiments into an art form others could experience.

“Informed by Process, Performance, and Conceptual art, as well as by Minimalism’s radical reconfiguration of our experience of sculpture and space, these early projection-based installations reveal a new language of expression and experience,” says Grove. In certain works, the viewer is included as an active participant. For example, Simone Forti’s *Striding Crawling* (1977) contains a holographic image of Forti dancing, which is illuminated from the center by a candle. The image becomes activated only when the viewer moves around the perimeter of the piece — the viewer “performs” the work.

In Anthony McCall’s *Line Describing a Cone* (1973), a film is projected onto the wall of a darkened room: a slim pencil of light slowly evolves into a large hollow cone. The projection appears as a circle drawn on the screen while the light fills the gallery with the appearance of a three-dimensional form.

Bruce Nauman’s *Spinning Spheres* (1970) and Dennis Oppenheim’s *Echo* (1973) are both examples of artists trying to create disruptive or disorienting experiences for the viewer. Works by

Vito Acconci and Robert Morris combine architectural and psychological elements to establish alternately stable and disorienting environments, emphasizing a split in our perception of “real” and projected space.

Gallery Space

Projected images are presented on and around the walls of the gallery in various forms — split, overlapping, minimized, maximized, rotated, serialized — so that the experience is radically different from that generally encountered at the CMA. The museum becomes a place for interaction between the art and the viewer. To accommodate this, the CMA’s North Gallery is being reconfigured into a series of unique spaces to fit the specifications of each artist’s work. Nearly every work will have its own room. As Grove puts it, “Walking through the exhibition will take visitors through a series of experiences, yet the overall experience makes a cohesive statement.”

Contemporary Art at CMA

Into the Light is the first traveling exhibition overseen at CMA by Grove, who joined the CMA staff last year. “**Into the Light** is an accessible show and deals with issues important to artists today,” he notes. “It lays the foundation for future shows focusing on art of our times.” Beginning next year, the department of contemporary art at CMA will curate its own shows in a new gallery space dedicated to displaying temporary exhibitions of very recent art.

Catalogue

This exhibition is accompanied by a 183-page full-color catalogue, written by Chrissie Iles, curator of **Into the Light** and curator of film and video at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The book includes an essay by writer, curator, and artist Thomas Zummer, and is available in the CMA bookstore, along with other books about the artists participating in this show. *Into The Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964–1977* has been published by the Whitney Museum of American Art and is distributed by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York (hardcover \$45).

Related Exhibition on View at the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art

The Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, a five-minute drive from CMA in Cleveland’s University Circle area, is presenting a video installation of works by the Chicago-based artist Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, a recent recipient of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s

"genius grant." The show exemplifies how video has evolved over the past decade into the premier medium of contemporary art from its experimental origins in the 1960s. [See enclosed release.]

Programs

An afternoon conference on **Into the Light** with Simone Forti, Dan Graham, Anthony McCall, Dennis Oppenheim, Anne Rorimer, and Chrissie Iles is planned, as are film screenings and several exhibition dialogues. Simone Forti will present an evening of dance performance. [See enclosed release about programs.]

Acknowledgements

Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art, 1964-1977 was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The promotional sponsor for the Cleveland showing is 90.3 WCPN. The Ohio Arts Council supports the CMA using state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.

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For more information about the CMA, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.clevelandart.org.

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Editors please note: The media kit containing this news release also contains a checklist of the exhibition, a release about the complementary exhibition at the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, a release about related programs, and a guide to visiting Cleveland. Please contact CMA's communications office if you need more information or images.